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PAGE 01 STATE 022522

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH MARIO SOARES

1. THE SECRETARY MET ON JANUARY 26 WITH PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES. THE CONVERSATION COVERED A BROAD RANGE OF TOPICS, INCLUDING US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, INTERNAL POLITICS IN LISBON, THE ROLE OF THE PCP, AND THE SITUATIONS IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. US POLICY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

THE SECRETARY PRAISED SOARES FOR HIS COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID HE WANTED SOARES TO KNOW THAT WE SUPPORTED HIM AND PORTUGUESE DEMOCRACY AND THAT OUR MUTUAL COOPERATION DURING THE PAST MONTHS HAS WORKED VERY WELL. THE SECRETARY TOLD SOARES THAT, BASED UPON RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN, WE WERE PUTTING TOGETHER
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 022522

SOME PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THE

SECRETARY EMPHASIZED HIS VIEW THAT WE SHOULD DO SOMETHING BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. SOARES SAID HE THOUGHT THE US HAD SHOWN GREAT TACT AND UNDERSTANDING IN DEALING WITH

PORTUGAL AND THAT HE WAS IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH AMB. CARLUCCI. ON ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, SOARES SUGGESTED THAT FINANCE MINISTER SALGADO ZENHA VISIT WASHINGTON IN EARLY MARCH AND THAT THE ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH HIM AT THAT TIME. THE SECRETARY AGREED AND PROMISED THAT A US "PACKAGE" WOULD BE PREPARED BY THEN.

3. INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION.

SOARES SAID THAT THE COMMUNISTS' ATTEMPT TO SEIZE POWER HAD BEEN FRUSTRATED, BUT THEY MIGHT TRY AGAIN. THE CREDIT FOR DEFEATING THEM BELONGS TO THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WHO SET OUT VERY CLEARLY A POSITION IN FAVOR OF FREEDOM RATHER THAN A DICTATORSHIP. SOARES SAID THAT THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH WAS ALSO EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, ALBEIT VERY DISCREET. DURING THE ENTIRE CRISIS, SOARES SAID HE KEPT IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH CHURCH LEADERS.

4. SOARES BELIEVES THAT THE SCHEDULED PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WILL DEFINITELY BE HELD THOUGH POSSIBLY WITH SOME DELAY AND THAT THE SOCIALIST WILL WIN THEM. THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT DROP IN COMMUNIST VOTING STRENGTH AND PORTUGAL IS ENTERING A PERIOD OF PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC NORMALIZATION. SOARES SEES THE ECONOMY AS THE ONLY REAL DANGER POINT: DETERIORATING CONDITIONS COULD PRODUCE AN "EXPLOSION WITH UNEXPECTED SOCIAL AGITATION" WHICH THE COMMUNISTS WOULD EXPLOIT.

5. SOARES SAID HE BELIEVES IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE FOR THE MILITARY TO GO AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PARTIES AND REMAIN IN POWER, NOR IS THAT THE INTENTION OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE ELECTION RESULTS WILL DETERMINE THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THE COMPOSITION OF THAT GOVERNMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT RIGHT NOW. "EVERYTHING

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 022522

DEPENDS ON THE PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER PARTIES."

6. COMMUNISTS IN GOVERNMENT.

SOARES TOLD THE SECRETARY THAT HE BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT TO KEEP THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT NOW SO AS TO ASSOCIATE THEM WITH UNPOPULAR

AUSTERITY MEASURES. THE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION HAS GREAT "SYMBOLIC VALUE" EVEN THOUGH THE PARTY HAS BEEN CUT OUT OF EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE. THE SECRETARY REMINDED SOARES OF US OPPOSITION TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN

EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS BUT NOTED THAT SOARES' METHODS SO FAR HAVE PROVED SUCCESSFUL. SOARES REPLIED THAT PORTUGAL MAY BE SUI GENERIS AND THAT HE DOESN'T HOLD STRONGLY TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES. IN PORTUGAL, THE SOCIALISTS WERE TRYING TO BEAT THE COMMUNISTS AT THEIR OWN GAME.

7. ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE.

SOARES SAID HE IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT ANGOLA, AND THE SOCIALISTS ARE DOING EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO MAINTAIN PORTUGAL'S PRESENT POLICY OF NEUTRALITY. BUT THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF PRO-MPLA PRESSURE IN LISBON. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT WE ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE MPLA AS SUCH. IF IT HAD COME TO POWER AS FRELIMO DID IN MOZAMBIQUE, WE WOULD HAVE HAD NO TROUBLE IN DEALING WITH IT. BUT THE PRESENCE OF 12,000 CUBANS AND \$200 MILLION OF SOVIET EQUIPMENT IS A GEOPOLITICAL FACT. IF THE SOVIETS ARE GIVEN THE RIGHT TO INTERVENE ON THIS SCALE IN OTHER AREAS, WE SHALL HAVE TOTALLY NEW GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES. SOARES AGREED AND SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE (HE LUNCHEDED WITH THEM JANUARY 26) THAT THE "US CANNOT CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FREE WORLD BY CLOSING ITS EYES COMPLETELY TO REALITIES." SOARES SAID THAT HE BELIEVES IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY GRAVE FOR OTHER COUNTRIES, AND THE WESTERN WORLD IN GENERAL, IF PORTUGAL RECOGNIZED THE MPLA. RECENTLY, HE SAID, HE DETECTED
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 022522

SIGNS OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE MPLA AND AN EROSION IN THE SUPPORT WHICH THE MPLA ONCE ENJOYED IN CERTAIN GOVERNMENTS, NOTABLY YUGOSLAVIA. IN SOARES' VIEW, THE MPLA IS NOW A SOVIET PAWN.

8. ON MOZAMBIQUE, SOARES SAID HE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAS BEEN A FRELIMO MOVEMENT TOWARD THE SOVIETS AND AWAY FROM THE CHINESE, PROBABLY BECAUSE OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT WITH THE MPLA. HE SUGGESTED THAT SAMORA MACHEL MAY BE MENTALLY UNBALANCED AND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT WHAT HE TERMED OPEN PERSECUTION OF THE SEVERAL THOUSAND PORTUGUESE STILL LIVING IN MOZAMBIQUE.

9. THE SECRETARY EXPRESSED AGAIN HIS GREAT RESPECT FOR SOARES AND OUR DESIRE TO ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

IN PORTUGAL BEFORE IT PRODUCES UNDESIRABLE POLITICAL -
CONSEQUENCES. HE TOLD SOARES THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED
TO HEAR FROM HIM DIRECTLY IF HE WANTED TO COMMUNICATE
ANY URGENT OR SENSITIVE MESSAGES AND THAT HE MIGHT VISIT
PORTUGAL AFTER THE NATO MEETING IN MAY. KISSINGER

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